

forcing the masa through the slot, toward the sheeter rollers, with the projection on at least one shaft.

41. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in Claim 38, wherein said forcing is accomplished by rotating the shaft with a motor.

42. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in claim 38, wherein the masa hopper also has a pair of opposed, horizontally aligned, primary rollers between the slot and the sheeter rollers, the primary rollers each having a generally cylindrical surface and two ends, the method further comprising the steps of:  
rotating the primary rollers;  
drawing the masa between the primary rollers;  
compressing the masa into a generally uniform curtain; and  
feeding said uniform curtain into the sheeter rollers.

44. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in claim 42, wherein the masa hopper also has two endcaps, each endcap mounted around the ends of the primary rollers, the method further comprising the step of:  
preventing movement of the masa past the ends of the primary rollers.

45. (Amended) A method for feeding masa to a pair of aligned, opposed sheeter rollers, the sheeter rollers located adjacent to a masa hopper having an opening for receiving masa and a slot for dispensing masa, the masa hopper also having at least

one shaft above the slot, each shaft having a projection, the method comprising the steps of:

placing the masa through the opening in the masa hopper;

feeding the masa to at least one shaft; and

removing gas bubbles from the masa with the projection on at least one shaft.

48. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in Claim 45, wherein said forcing is accomplished by rotating the shaft with a motor.

49. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in claim 45, wherein the masa hopper also has a pair of opposed, horizontally aligned, primary rollers between the slot and the sheeter rollers, the primary rollers each having a generally cylindrical surface and two ends, the method further comprising the steps of:

rotating the primary rollers;

drawing the masa between the primary rollers;

compressing the masa into a generally uniform curtain; and

feeding said uniform curtain into the sheeter rollers.

51. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in claim 49, wherein the masa hopper also has two endcaps, each endcap mounted around the ends of the primary rollers, the method further comprising the step of:

preventing movement of the masa past the ends of the primary rollers.

52. (Amended) A method for feeding masa to a pair of aligned, opposed sheeter rollers, the sheeter rollers located adjacent to a masa hopper having an opening for receiving masa and a slot for dispensing masa, the masa hopper also having at least one shaft above the slot, each shaft having a projection, the method comprising the steps of:

placing the masa through the opening in the masa hopper;

feeding the masa to at least one shaft;

removing gas bubbles from the masa with the projection on at least one shaft;

and

forcing the masa through the slot, toward the sheeter rollers, with the projection on at least one shaft.

54. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in Claim 52, wherein said forcing is accomplished by rotating the shaft with a motor.

55. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in claim 52, wherein the masa hopper also has a pair of opposed, horizontally aligned, primary rollers between the slot and the sheeter rollers, the primary rollers each having a generally cylindrical surface and two ends, the method further comprising the steps of:

rotating the primary rollers;

drawing the masa between the primary rollers;

compressing the masa into a generally uniform curtain; and

feeding said uniform curtain into the sheeter rollers.

57. (Amended) The method for feeding masa as defined in claim 55,  
wherein the masa hopper also has two endcaps, each endcap mounted around the  
ends of the primary rollers, the method further comprising the step of:  
preventing movement of the masa past the ends of the primary rollers.